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### **Oppose SB 979 parts 2 and 4**

My name is Eric Santini and I am a multi-family builder/developer as well as a property manager and apartment owner from Ellington, CT. I am also the immediate past President and Chairman of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut. Our family business manages over 1,200 apartment units located in the towns of Vernon and Ellington, CT. My father started our business over 50 years ago and I now manage our properties with my brother Kevin. We have built and developed all the properties that we own and currently have approximately 25 employees that service our properties.

### ***Oppose Section 2 - Energy Labels Can Be Misleading***

Part 2 of this bill would require apartment owners to provide an energy label to a prospective tenant in an apartment unit that was built prior to 2000. I believe that this is onerous and unnecessary. The energy label would reflect energy usage from the previous tenant and would not necessarily reflect the energy efficiency of the unit. For example, a family of 4 that has one or more family members in the home all day will most likely use more energy than a couple without children who are at work all day. Because of this, the energy label could be misleading to a prospective tenant. The tenant would be better served to ask the property owner questions pertaining to the efficiency of the heating system and the quantity/quality of insulation in the walls and attic. Apartment owners who have energy saving components in their buildings should be more than willing to share this information with prospective tenants. In addition, the time needed to produce labels could potentially add several days to the turnover of an apartment unit from one tenant to another which will result in increased costs for apartment owners who will pass it on through the rent charged to tenants.

### ***Oppose Section 4 – Residential Construction Under the Newly Adopted Building Code is Already Extremely Efficient While Our Existing Housing Stock is Old and Inefficient***

Our state became one of the first states in the country to adopt the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). The IECC is updated every 3 years and is absorbed into our state building code based on our building code adoption cycle. Therefore, new residential construction is consistently being built more efficient. ***In fact, the average new home in Connecticut is built over twice as efficiently as the average resale in the marketplace.*** The progressive and perpetual changes to the energy code require our builders to incur costs that resale homes don't have to. If we desire to make a real, substantial, and sustainable impact to our energy usage in the state, we should focus our attention on incentivizing energy retrofits to one of the oldest housing stocks in the country which totals over ***1.5 million households*** per that latest US Census instead of allowing municipalities to adopt an even more progressive and costly energy code that will add to the cost of construction in the midst of a statewide housing crisis. Certainly, the approximately ***5,000 housing starts*** that we will build this year under the most current energy code does not represent the true challenge that our state faces in meeting Governor Lamont's climate objectives.

### **Giving the Municipalities the Option to Adopt A More Stringent Energy Code is Ripe for Abuse**

Complying with the requirements of the zero energy provisions of the IECC will add considerable cost to new residential construction and could potentially curtail the much-needed production of new single and multi-family homes throughout the state. Municipalities could potentially use this as a weapon against builders and developers who are interested in building in their towns causing developers to look at neighboring towns that haven't adopted the stretch code. If one town adopts a stretch code to slow construction while a neighboring town doesn't and adds construction what does this accomplish? In addition, many towns have fought affordable housing developments and the adoption of a stretch code would only serve to add another weapon in their arsenal to make it more difficult for developers to build housing in their town. Our state building code adoption

process has been time tested and produces a level playing field for builders and developers that work in cities and towns throughout our state. With Connecticut's recent early adoption of the 2021 IECC, we are building houses more energy efficient than that vast majority of the country.

### **Solving the Problem**

If we want to accomplish a more energy efficient housing stock we must focus on the problem, the energy inefficiency of an aging housing stock, instead of trying to incrementally move the energy efficiency needle on new residential construction which is already built to a perpetually progressive standard due to our state building code adoption process. We should be educating, incentivizing, and producing attractive financing options to homeowners and apartment owners who are interested in retrofitting their buildings with materials and products that lead to greater energy efficiency. I appreciate the opportunity to testify and respectfully ask that the Environment Committee opposes Senate Bill 979 as written and strikes sections 2 and 4 from the language of the proposed bill.